



Neighborhood Networks NEWS

Your Online Access to Opportunity

Fall 1996

Neighborhood Networks Receives Vice President's Hammer Award

On July 16, 1996, a representative from Vice President Al Gore's office presented the National Performance Review (NPR) Hammer Award to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for creating the Neighborhood Networks initiative.

The Hammer Award recognizes teams of federal, state, and municipal employees who are working with citizens to build a better government. Over 250 Hammer Awards have been presented to teams exemplifying the NPR principles of putting customers

first, cutting red tape, empowering employees, and getting back to basics. The team receives a wall plaque Hammer Award, and individual team members receive a Hammer lapel pin and a special certificate signed by the Vice President.

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing launched Neighborhood Networks in September 1995. This community-based initiative uses computerized learning and online access as tools to help residents of assisted and insured housing become

self-sufficient. By forming partnerships, HUD staff, property owners, residents, and community stakeholders have established 43 Neighborhood Networks Centers throughout the United States; 491 are currently underway. Although the initiative is still in its infancy, many of these centers are beginning to produce results. Residents involved in Neighborhood Networks Centers are educating themselves and entering the job market in word processing, data management, child care, and property management positions.

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Doug Farbrother, Senior Manager, National Performance Review, presents Diana Goodwin Shavey, National Field Coordinator, Neighborhood Networks, with Hammer Award.

Regional Conferences Evoke Enthusiasm

Participants report there was something for everyone

"A wonderful, informative two days of meetings" was how Sharon Guglielmo, president of Orenid, Inc. in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, described the Neighborhood Networks conference she attended. This opinion was echoed by many of the HUD field staff, property owners, residents, business owners, and community stakeholders who assembled to learn how to develop and sustain computerized learning centers in insured and assisted multifamily housing.

The four conferences held in New Orleans, Seattle, Boston, and Kansas City offered something for everyone. In addition to workshops on setting up a center, developing a business plan, and marketing the initiative, there were mini sessions that addressed the specific needs of residents and property managers.

Presenters at the conferences were drawn from institutions of higher learning, businesses, and nonprofit organizations throughout the country. Each agreed that Neighborhood Networks is an initiative whose time has come. With the explosive growth of electronic communication and the computerization of the job market, computer skills are becoming an economic necessity. Michael Connor, senior director of Tools, Operations, and Quality at Apple Computer, Inc. put it this way, "Knowing how to use computers will increasingly define the economic haves from the have-nots. You should run, not walk, to get on the information superhighway."

During the conferences, participants also learned about successful Neighborhood Networks Centers such as Creekwood Village in



By taking a practical, how-to approach, Neighborhood Networks conferences help participants develop and maintain their own centers.

Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Creekwood and its primary partner Stillman College are working together to offer training in computer, interpersonal, parenting, and financial management skills. Like other successful centers, Creekwood is taking a holistic approach to creating economic self-sufficiency and building its community. And, as conference participants heard, the hard work is paying off. Residents involved in Neighborhood Networks Centers are educating themselves, improving their job skills, and breaking the cycle of economic dependency.

Clearly, Neighborhood Networks is ahead of the curve in using computer technology as a medium to foster social and economic opportunity—a fact that was applauded by Ruth Prince-Dukes, assistant in building construction and community outreach coordinator for the



Demonstrations and exhibits provide participants with hands-on training.

University of Florida: "I commend Neighborhood Networks for its efforts and vision in terms of the new concept of using computer-based technology to empower the community."

For conference notes, participant lists, and other information, visit the Publications section of the Neighborhood Networks Web site: www.hud.gov/nnw/nnwindex.html.

Software, Hardware, and ISP Selection

Tips for making the right choices

Choosing the right software and hardware is critical to the success of your center. So is your choice of an Internet Service Provider (ISP). In addition to your budget, the types of programs your center offers (e.g., adult education, job preparation, afterschool activities, microenterprise development) will determine your selections.

Software selection. Choose your software before choosing hardware. Start small with the basics and a selection of other software packages. Read software reviews in computer magazines. Talk to people who are using the software you're considering. Be sure you try out the software before buying it!

Your center should have the following basic software capabilities:

- ◆ Word processing
- ◆ Desktop publishing



Nic Retsinas, Assistant Secretary and Commissioner of Housing, looks on as residents of Villa d'Ames Apartments in Marrero, Louisiana, try out their new computers.

- ◆ Spreadsheets

- ◆ Graphics

You may also wish to include additional software for:

- ◆ Recreation (e.g., chess, solitaire, Tetris)
- ◆ CD-ROM programs (e.g., touring and reference)
- ◆ Databases
- ◆ Mapping

Hardware selection. After you've selected the right software, you can choose the appropriate hardware. Hardware choices begin with the platform. A Macintosh is best suited for desktop and multimedia publishing. A personal computer (PC), which is DOS- or Windows-based, may offer lower cost for equivalent capacity and is best suited for business programs. A dual platform (Macs and PCs) offers clients broader opportunities for skill development.

Keep the following guidelines in mind when purchasing hardware:

- ◆ At least 8 megabytes (MB), preferably 16, is desirable for Random-Access-Memory (RAM).
- ◆ For internal hard drives, a minimum of 500 MB is desirable.
- ◆ Access to the Internet requires a modem. Modems should be 28.8 baud or higher.
- ◆ CD-ROM drives are needed if you purchase CD-ROM-based software.

New hardware for one system usually runs about \$2,000. In addition, you'll need one printer for every four to six computers. New laser printer costs range from \$400 to \$1,500.

Computer configurations and ISP selection. Once you purchase your hardware, you'll have to decide if you want your computers to be stand-alone or connected systems. Stand-alone systems require that software be purchased for and installed on each computer. A telephone line and modem is also required for each stand-alone system if Internet access is desired.

A local area network (LAN) connects all the computers to a single server. Software is purchased for and installed on the server, and software licenses are purchased for every system connected to the server. A big advantage of a LAN is that it enables users to share information. Setting up a LAN, however, requires additional labor, equipment, and maintenance costs. The size of your center will probably be a determining factor in whether it is more cost effective to have stand-alone or connected systems.

An ISP or an online service such as Prodigy, CompuServe, or America Online can provide you with access to the Internet.

ISPs are popping up all over the country. According to Boardwatch, the number of ISPs in North America jumped from about 1,450 to just under 2,300 between the middle of February and the first of May—a 59-percent growth rate. ISPs offer access to a Web browser for a monthly fee. When choosing an ISP, consider performance as well as price. You can ask the ISP for references directly, or you can post your questions about a particular ISP on a newsgroup. Be sure to get your activation date (the date you're up and running) in writing.

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Residents' Forum

Residents talk about their success in establishing centers

"The Neighborhood Networks concept is wonderful. I think that HUD is doing a great service to the community and mankind. Being a teacher of computers at a middle school, I know that without computer knowledge, you won't be able to survive in this world.

"The residents of my housing community are owners. It took us about two years and several hundred thousand dollars in consulting fees to make it happen, but it happened. After we bought the site last year, we decided to set up a Neighborhood Networks Center. We applied for a drug elimination grant, and half of that was designated as start-up funds for the center. Initially, we just wanted to learn how to use a computer. Now, we're getting

more involved and have a totally different attitude.

"I know that Neighborhood Networks is going to make the kind of difference that will allow my community to remain viable. Our partnerships are falling into place, and the value of our property is now about \$8 million.

"Being involved in housing, you see a lot of programs start and fail. This program is not going to fail. It can only be successful because it's a needed service that empowers the residents to be whatever they choose to be."

*Annette McKinney
Diamond View Residents
Association, Inc.
San Francisco, CA*

"Our center is aimed at producing jobs and not just training. We've been fortunate enough to partner with our local telephone service, which is wiring all of our units for Internet access. The service is also installing ISDN switches, which permit the rapid transfer of data. So, we're looking at partnering with PAC Bell and other employers to do telecommuting and get training in other entrepreneurial activities such as computer animation. The center will initially give us the basic skills, but a lot of the subsequent training

and financially driven activities will occur in the units. Our overall objective is to significantly reduce the number of residents that require subsidies."

*Kerry Pierson
Shelter Hill Apartments
Mill Valley, CA*

"I'm really excited about the Neighborhood Networks initiative. I'm a resident of Highland Village Apartments attending this conference with the property owner. Our residents don't know about Neighborhood Networks yet, but when I get back, I'm going to spread the word. There are a lot of young, single women in our housing community with small children. They don't have very much education. It's doubtful any have had job experience, so they really need this program. I want to help them get beyond the point they're at. I was there five years ago. I was a mother of two children on welfare. We have a large room that could be easily converted into a center. I'm here to see what kind of programs are available, so we can offer them to our residents."

*Edna Gullick
Highland Village Apartments
Henderson, NV*



Resident/owner Annette McKinney has seen Neighborhood Networks turn her housing development into a viable community.

Owners'/Managers' Forum

Owners and managers talk about their success in establishing centers

"We've established a center at the Martin Luther King Apartments in Seattle. We think it's a positive thing for the site. We have two other labs, one of which is at Mount Baker Village Apartments. Here we offer a Future Kids program, which teaches literacy, science, and math."

*Doug Repman
Quantum Management Services
Lynnwood, WA*

"Funds from a drug elimination grant helped start one of our Neighborhood Networks Centers. In Davis, we put centers in a couple of insured properties because of market forces—our competitors had computers, so we had to have them. As a fee-management agent, I'm beginning to educate owners that we need these centers to compete in the new, emerging market. People are more transitory, moving from one property to another. We need to have a property people want to live in."

*John Berkley
Berkley Management
Davis, CA*

"We opened up our first center the 8th of August. We set up a consortium among five of our rental properties in Lancaster, California. Three of the properties are located next to each other: two are assisted housing, and one is a conventional site. We converted a couple of the units at the



Neighborhood Networks Centers help property owners and managers compete in a new, emerging market. From left to right: Doug Repman, Marty Gay, John Berkley, John Grady, Jack Murray, and Jack Krystal.

conventional site into a Neighborhood Networks Center. I want to thank the L.A. HUD office for helping us put this project together. The staff doesn't often get a lot of praise, and they were very helpful."

*John Grady
Monfrie, Inc.
San Diego, CA*

"Our goal is to have 50 of these centers either up and running or 80 percent along by the end of this year. One thing you shouldn't do as you look at Neighborhood Networks is to tie yourself down to any one model. Go into it with an open mind. We discussed with the Richmond office today how we're working with funds from a drug grant to get a center started in Richmond. There are a lot of different ways to do this."

*Jack Murray
Insignia
Greenville, SC*

"At Quail Hollow, we have a Neighborhood Networks Center within our clubhouse. We like to say that on the one side, we have an athletic facility to exercise the body, and on the other, we have a computer learning center to exercise the mind. Because about 50 percent of our residents are connected to the military, we have the Navy as a partner. The Navy will loan us additional computers and may be involved with our expansion efforts."

*Jack Krystal
Quail Hollow
Silverdale, WA*

Federal Partnerships and Neighborhood Networks

NASA helps Richmond center blast into cyberspace

On June 19, 1996, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at Langley Research Center and HUD finalized a two-year agreement to provide affordable Internet access to the Neighborhood Networks Center in Friendship Village—a HUD-assisted apartment complex in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This agreement marks the first in what promises to be a growing number of federal partnerships with Neighborhood Networks Centers.

The partnership between NASA and Friendship Village grew out of the networking efforts of Henry Colonna, Senior Resident Initiative Specialist in the HUD Richmond field office. It was during a meeting with Brian Callahan, the Director of Innovative Technology for WHRO—the local public broadcasting station—that Henry first heard about NASA's Affordable Technology to Link America's Schools (ATLAS) initiative.

ATLAS is currently being used in more than 60 schools nationwide, supporting the President's goal to connect all of America's public schools to the Internet by the year 2000. ATLAS incorporates a UNIX-based workstation and specially designed software to connect an entire network of computers to the Internet via a single phone line. ATLAS then uses a proxy cache server to store Internet addresses and information locally. Once stored in memory on the workstation, this information can be accessed almost immediately by computers on the local network, thereby eliminating

the need for faster, more expensive Internet hook ups.

Henry met with Jeff Seaton, a research scientist at NASA, who was immediately receptive to bringing NASA's technology to Friendship Village and nearby Birdneck Elementary, which is attended by 100 of the community's children. Recent legislation and executive orders have directed federal agencies to heighten their efforts to move their technologies into the private sector. In a matter of weeks, NASA and HUD had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which both parties delineated their roles: NASA will bring its technology to the Neighborhood Networks Center, and HUD will monitor the center's programs to help create successful technology transfer practices. Both agencies will work jointly to foster community awareness of the need for technology development and implementation.

In addition to NASA, Friendship Village is benefiting from a second federal partnership. Because members of the Norfolk office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were already well known in the community for their participation in outreach programs, they were invited to come aboard. A special agent and a computer specialist from the Norfolk office will teach residents how to use the computers and software during initial training sessions.

On the West Coast, another federal partnership is in the making. In September, HUD and the U.S. Department of the Navy will finalize a

Memorandum of Understanding to support the Neighborhood Networks Center at Quail Hollow in Silverdale, Washington. "At Quail Hollow," says property manager Jack Krystal, "we like to say that we have an athletic facility to exercise the body and a computer learning center to exercise the mind." Because almost 50 percent of Quail Hollow's residents are connected to the military, the Navy plans to loan computers to the center and may be involved in expansion efforts.

Working together, all of these federal partners will help provide the economic and community development tools that the residents of Friendship Village and Quail Hollow need to ensure a better future for themselves and their children.

To encourage partnerships between HUD and other federal agencies, Neighborhood Networks consultant, John Allen, will be meeting with federal representatives to promote the Neighborhood Networks initiative. Preliminary meetings have taken place with the Departments of Education, Justice, and Labor; Health and Human Services; the General Services Administration (GSA); and the Small Business Administration. These efforts have produced some positive results. A Memorandum of Agreement is being drawn up for GSA's north-west regional office to supply excess computers and office furniture to Neighborhood Networks Centers in that part of the country. For further information about Neighborhood Networks federal partnerships, call John Allen at 206-220-5200.

Most online services charge a monthly membership fee and an hourly fee for connect time. You may also purchase unlimited access for a flat monthly rate. Online services are especially helpful for newcomers to the Internet. By providing user-friendly "channels" like *entertainment*, *news*, and *sports*, home pages are designed to help new users navigate the Net.

How they did it. To help you get started, the following three Neighborhood Networks Centers tell you how they handled issues of software, hardware, and ISP selection. Examining their choices and costs will help you make your own selections.

Plumley Village East. This center, located in Worcester, Massachusetts, opened its doors in September 1995. Start-up costs were financed by the property owner and a number of community partners. Plumley offers a wide variety of programs including GED preparation, English as a Second Language, workforce readiness, and job development. To support the center's activities, Plumley has one 486 and two Pentium multimedia PCs. The Pentiums cost \$1,700 each. Included in this price were Windows 95 and a variety of Microsoft software such as Word, Kids, Bookshelf, and PowerPoint. Sound cards for multimedia capability ran \$99 each. For database management, the center purchased one copy of Microsoft Access for \$345.

Plumley's three computers are networked. Each Ethernet card, which is used to connect the systems, costs \$60. The labor for setting up the LAN was donated by a local computer consulting business—LGM. Installation costs for a dedi-

cated phone line ran \$575. The monthly charge for use of this line is \$9.95. Plumley is connected to its ISP via a 28.8 baud modem that it purchased for \$150. Plumley's ISP—IGC PeaceNet—offers unlimited access the first year as an incentive to go online. After the first year, access to the Internet will run about \$30 a month.

Northport and Packer Apartments. These centers, located in Madison, Wisconsin, opened their doors in March 1996. Start-up costs were financed by residual receipts. Northport and Packer offer a wide variety of programs for child and adult education as well as job and business development. To support the centers' activities, Northport and Packer each have seven Pentium multimedia PCs and seven Power Macs. Each Pentium—equipped with a 15-inch monitor, 16 MB CD-ROM, Windows 95, and a variety of Microsoft software—was \$2,800. Power Macs ran \$2,400 each. The cost of a Hewlett Packard 4 MV laser printer and a Hewlett Packard color Deskjet ran \$1,400 and \$219, respectively. Carmen Porco, Director of Housing and Services, reminds centers with mixed PC/Mac platforms that shared printers will need Postscript capability.

By working through their local school district and software vendors, Northport and Packer were able to obtain educational group rates for software. Considerable savings were realized on software such as Microsoft Suites. Suites, which retails in Madison for \$495, was available to educational groups for \$195.

All of the PCs and Macs at Northport and Packer are networked via Novell Netware 4.1 to a Compaq

1500 file server. Each station also has some software loaded on the hard drive so that it has stand-alone capabilities. The cost for setting up the LAN totaled \$4,200 per site. This cost included training on Novell Netware 4.1. Of the 14 stations at each site, 4 (2 PCs and 2 Macs) are connected to the Internet via telephone lines and a 28.8 baud modem. Phone lines were installed by Ameritech, the local phone service, at no cost. The monthly charge for each line is \$29. At the time of purchase, modems were \$250 each. Burbee, the ISP, provides unlimited access for \$19.95 per month. For an additional \$2 per month, Burbee can provide the centers with e-mail.

Crescent Park Apartments. This center, located in Richmond, California, opened its doors in February 1996. Start-up costs were financed by a drug elimination grant. Crescent Park offers a wide variety of programs including math and reading enrichment, word processing, and basic computer skills. To support the center's activities, Crescent Park has four Pentium multimedia PCs. The Pentiums cost \$1,300 each. Included in this price were Windows 95, Microsoft DOS 6.2, Microsoft Word 3.1, WordPerfect, Quicken, and Compton's 1995 Encyclopedia.

Crescent Park's four PCs are stand-alone. Four separate phone lines connect each PC to the Internet via a 14.4 baud modem. Installation costs for all lines totaled \$285. Each line runs \$16 per month. The Richmond Police Activities League—Crescent Park's ISP—provides unlimited access at \$20 per computer per month. The League also provides a full range of services including technical assistance, software purchasing, instruction, and repair at a cost of \$6,500 a year.

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